

Policy Recommendations to Advance Pay Equity for People with Disabilities

Note: This list is not exhaustive of all supportive policies and funding but is intended as a starting point.

Federal:

Legislation:

- Pass S. 260: [Transformation to Competitive Employment Act](#), which would end the loophole allowing subminimum wages/sheltered workshops to continue, and sets standards for employment for people with disabilities

State/Local:

Funding:

- Grant or tax credit program to incentivize employers to increase both the percentage of employees with disabilities and the positions of people with disabilities in management/leadership positions

Legislation:

- Continue support for and adoption of state-level [Employment First principles](#) aimed at aligning policies, service delivery models, and reimbursement structures to ensure competitive integrated employment for youth and adults. Consider requiring an annual progress report from state agencies toward employment first principles and practices.
- Model legislation after federal Section 503 rules of the Rehabilitation Act to require employers to set affirmative action goals (Section 503's aspirational goal is 7%) for hiring people with disabilities and to report progress toward meeting these goals. This will ensure that employers include disability in their strategies around recruitment and hiring.
- Track and publish, for transparency purposes, data around % of employees who identify as having a disability for all employers (perhaps over a certain size)
- Remove barriers for people with disabilities to obtaining a high school diploma, including high school graduation qualifying exams

Structures

- Create/revamp state and local task forces/committees to focus on hiring more people with disabilities and ensuring they advance to leadership positions at the same rates as people without disabilities

- Create local and state certifications for disability-owned businesses and promote this opportunity to people with disabilities who own businesses
- Create an office for people with disabilities or dedicate at least one person to this effort, and ensure that this office/person reports directly to the mayor/governor

Practices

- Co-design with people with disabilities and policymakers a process to review barriers to hiring, promotion, career advancement and come up with policy ideas to address those barriers; and/or create a standing advisory group/board to give input on these issues-include people of different ages, geographical areas, different disability types.
- Promote coordinated employer engagement efforts across state agencies (including Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Center Network, Health and Social Services)
- Highlight and recognize the businesses that are exemplars in hiring and advancing people with disabilities (through resolutions, proclamations, free advertising in public places)

Partnerships

- Partner with local and state chambers of commerce to champion pay equity for people with disabilities and recognize/reward businesses demonstrating this commitment
- Partner with community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, businesses, faith-based groups, and others to raise awareness and action around the issue of pay equity
- Partner with transportation agency to rethink transportation design to be people-centered, accessible, and equitable for everyone (including building more transit-oriented development, becoming more pedestrian-friendly, etc.)

Please contact IEL policy staff at policy@iel.org with any questions, comments, or to partner with us on these efforts.